

UGSSP1/2013-2014

UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA STUDENTS' SOCIETY

University of Guyana Sports Policy

Green Paper

November 2013

Submitted by the University of Guyana Students' Society to Academic Board.

Preamble

This Green Paper on a University of Guyana Sports Policy arises from the realization that University sports is widely regarded as a lien on the already strained revenue stream of the University of Guyana (UG), instead of as a means of augmenting the spirit and reputation of the University and as a tool for developing students into well-rounded, civic-minded citizens.

The objectives of any UG Sports Policy should include (but not be limited to):

- 1) Making UG's sporting calendar financially sustainable;
- 2) Removing impediments to and encouraging broader student participation in sports;
- 3) Molding the University's sports teams into nationally and internationally competitive entities.

Proposals

In realizing these objectives, partnerships should be forged by the University's administration with, among others, stakeholders such as the government, private sector, and national sporting associations.

Following are recommended courses of action to attain the aforementioned aims of a UG Sports Policy, and they are categorized according to the objectives they are intended to fulfill:

- *Financial Sustainability of the UG's Sporting Calendar* –
Overwhelmingly, all aspects of sports at the University of Guyana – from the staging of meets to training to athlete's participation in tourneys abroad – rely on a thinly stretched \$6 million Sports Fund, which is financed through an annual mandatory Sports Fee of \$1,000 levied on all students of the University. As a result of an over-dependency on that Fund, University-organized meets are often lacking in incentives, shortened, under-resourced, poorly marketed and poorly attended.
To make it financially sustainable, the Administration ought to:
 - a) Attract sponsors for championships and tournaments – in exchange for a cleverly designed marketing arrangement, sponsors may, by way of their contributions in the form of incentives, event paraphernalia, sporting equipment and materials, etc., reduce the costs incurred by the Administration for the staging of these events.
 - b) Promote and commercialize sports meets – while slick marketing of a sporting event enhances its visibility and, thus, its attractiveness to sponsors in tandem with recommendation a) above, it will stimulate a demand among students and the general public, who will want and, more importantly, pay to attend a meet. Sports such as athletics, cricket, football and basketball are particularly suitable for commercialization.
 - c) Increase the Sports Fee to \$2,000 – this can only be justly done if a new social contract evolved whereby students, as a result of witnessing improvements in the University's sports amenities and culture, become willing to pay this increase.

- *Removing impediments to and encouraging broader participation*
 - a) Upgrading the sporting infrastructure – the patent lack of sporting facilities – in particular, a sports field with a pavilion and a gymnasium for weights training – is perhaps the greatest constraint to wider student participation in sports. To rectify this, the Administration should:
 - In collaboration with stakeholders, develop and implement a plan for the construction of a multipurpose sports field at the Sophia Entrance. Ideally, this facility should be equipped with pavilions and floodlights, and should be prepared and maintained year-round to facilitate a multitude of sporting activities such as: cricket, volleyball, football, rugby, track and field, etc.
 - Through franchising, or some other Administration-Private Sector arrangement, staff and equip the University's gym to raise it to an acceptable standard of utility. An arrangement with the private sector is recommended as the University's administration may not have the wherewithal to undertake the capital investment and operational aspects of the gym.
 - b) Incentivizing student participation in sports – a system of rewarding excellence in sports should be formulated. Rewards could be material or non-material:
 - Material incentives could include monetary awards, and tuition waivers.
 - Non-material incentives can take the form of awarding academic credits, and publicly honoring outstanding athletes at open ceremonies, or through commemorative billboards, etc.

- *Molding the University's Sports Teams into Nationally and Internationally Competitive Entities*

For teams to become competitive, emphasis should be placed on funding, recruitment, and training. Actions that should be taken include:

- a) Wooing corporate entities to act as Team Sponsors – who will assist in financing sports kits, providing supplements, participating in tourneys, etc. For instance, combinations of sponsors may 'adopt' the University's cricket, football, athletics and rugby teams.
- b) Scouting and recruiting promising athletes – University sports officials should attend high school athletic championships and other sporting contests to identify talented athletes, to whom scholarships could be offered in order to entice them to attend the University, and participate in its teams. This measure would also be to the benefit of athletes, as it would add to their skills set and diversify their income-earning prospects.
- c) Establishing, in partnership with the national sporting associations, well defined training programs to develop athletes into champions. Additionally, the criteria, for selection of athletes to participate in external meets on behalf of the University, must be clearly outlined and publicized.

Implementation

To refine and develop this Green Paper into a White Paper and, subsequently, a Policy, an ad-hoc committee should be formed to hold consultations with stakeholders (which include students), expand on these proposals and present them for ratification.